

**City University of Hong Kong  
Course Syllabus**

**offered by the School of Creative Media  
with effect from Semester A 2024/25**

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**Part I Course Overview**

<b>Course Title:</b>	<b>World Making: Artistic Strategies for Contingent Systems</b>
<b>Course Code:</b>	<b>SM6333</b>
<b>Course Duration:</b>	<b>One semester</b>
<b>Credit Units:</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Level:</b>	<b>P6</b>
<b>Medium of Instruction:</b>	<b>English</b>
<b>Medium of Assessment:</b>	<b>English</b>
<b>Prerequisites:</b> <i>(Course Code and Title)</i>	<b>Nil</b>
<b>Precursors:</b> <i>(Course Code and Title)</i>	<b>Nil</b>
<b>Equivalent Courses:</b> <i>(Course Code and Title)</i>	<b>Nil</b>
<b>Exclusive Courses:</b> <i>(Course Code and Title)</i>	<b>Nil</b>

## Part II Course Details

### 1. Abstract

System art, generative art, art as information ecology, automated thinking, autopoiesis: post World War II, the creative act underwent radical shifts in the wake of cybernetic and with the pervasiveness of machine cultures. The artists have to come to terms with the plurality of contingent systems which weaved into the fabric of contemporary life; The artistic agency has to take a step backwards and go meta. Through the concept of worldmaking, this course aims to give a theoretical and practical understanding of contemporary artistic strategies developed in the context of contingent systems. ‘Contingens,’ a medieval Latin term, expresses the idea of possible, from the verb ‘contingere’ (“to touch, to meet, to happen, attain to”). Contingent systems are not purely iterative entities. They are riddled with glitches, open-endedness, incomputable horizons, and they reconfigure the distribution of the sensible world and what being sentient beings means. We posit the worldmaking impulse as a set of artistic strategies aiming at opening new perspectives towards pervasive contingent systems.

By the completion of the class, the student will be able to:

- Understand the modes of creation deriving from experimental approaches to art;
- Develop expertise in the contemporary artistic practices affected by the world-making creative paradigm (avant-garde and modern arts, theatre, literature, cinema, fine arts, architecture, fashion);
- Explore the contribution of screen-based media, interactive and non-interactive media, theatrical scene, performance arts, installation arts, architecture, and cityscape to worldmaking;
- Understand the intellectual tools artists use (philosophy and cultural critique) in relation to their artistic practices (Marcel Duchamp, Jacques Ranciere, John Cleese, Jacques Attali, Giorgio Agamben, David Couzens Hoy, Merleau Ponty, Paul Virilio, Jorge Luis Borges)
- Understand the possibilities and ideologies embedded in world-making practices;

Topics discussed: Hybridity; Aesthetics; Culture; Beyond Systems /Negentropy; U-Dystopia; Space Environment; Space Mapping; Time; Event; Characters.

### 2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

(CILOs state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance.)

No.	CILOs	Weighting (if applicable)	Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick where appropriate)		
			A1	A2	A3
1.	To identify critically world-making as an artistic practice. To classify, describe, list critically the artistic practices invoking world-making.		✓		✓
2.	To memorize, identify, recognize the concepts at the crossing of world-making and critical new media studies. To hypothesize, reflect, generate new understandings of world-making			✓	
3.	To have an understanding of the tension between systemic and creative elements in contemporary creative practices.			✓	✓
4.	To be able to apply creatively the material from the class to work in collaboration with creative people doing world making practices.		✓	✓	✓
5.	Be able to articulate creatively concepts and empirical information in a diversity of contexts pertaining to world-making		✓		✓

6.	Be able to collaborate with fellow students to produce an innovative artistic strategy resting on one conception of the notion of world-making.			✓	✓
		100%			

A1: Attitude

*Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.*

A2: Ability

*Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.*

A3: Accomplishments

*Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.*

### 3. Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

*(LTAs designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs.)*

LTA	Brief Description	CILO No.						Hours/week (if applicable)
		1	2	3	4	5	6	
Lectures	Presentation of an extensive number of artists whose practice invoke directly or indirectly the concept of world-making and provide an overview on relevant theoretical resources relevant to the practice of world-making	✓	✓	✓				3 hrs/wk
In class presentation and discussion	Use the material from the lectures and readings to prepare the final project				✓	✓	✓	30mn/wk
Mentoring	Preparing for the final term assignment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	3 hrs
Individual search	gathering theoretical and empirical material (on line documentation)	✓			✓	✓	✓	1 hrs/wk
Weekly readings	To get familiar with critical new media studies and world-making practices	✓	✓	✓		✓		2 hrs/wk
Designing a art-project drawing on one of the conception of the notion of world-making	Using critically diverse artistic strategies opened by the notion of world-making.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	3 hrs/wk for 3 weeks

**4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)**

*(ATs are designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs.)*

Assessment Tasks/Activities	CILO No.						Weighting	Remarks
	1	2	3	4	5	6		
Continuous Assessment: 100%								
Conceptual Hybridization			✓	✓	✓	✓	5%	
in-class QUIZ	✓	✓	✓				20%	
in-class QUIZ	✓	✓	✓				20%	
In class group presentation			✓	✓	✓	✓	15%	
Final project	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	40%	
Examination: _____% (duration: _____, if applicable)							100%	

## 5. Assessment Rubrics

(Grading of student achievements is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities with the following rubrics.)

Applicable to students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Fair (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
1. Conceptual Hybridization	Ability to understand and use the concepts from the lectures and use them in a creative manner to develop a larger reflexion about World Making	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
2. Quiz	Ability to understand and use the concepts from the weekly readings	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
3. Quiz	Use the material of the class in a creative manner to conceive a transnarrative World proposal	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
4. In class presentation	Ability to explain in detail and with accuracy their project	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
5. Final project	Use the material of the class in a creative manner to conceive a transnarrative World	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels

Applicable to students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B)	Marginal (B-, C+, C)	Failure (F)
1. Conceptual Hybridization	Ability to understand and use the concepts from the lectures and use them in a creative manner to develop a larger reflexion about World Making	Excellent ability to understand and use the concepts from the lectures and use them in a creative manner to develop a larger	Good ability to understand and use the concepts from the lectures and use them in a creative manner to develop a larger	Marginal ability to understand and use the concepts from the lectures and use them in a creative manner to develop a larger	Lack of ability to understand and use the concepts from the lectures and use them in a creative manner to develop a larger

		reflexion about World Making	reflexion about World Making	reflexion about World Making	reflexion about World Making
2. Quiz	Ability to understand and use the concepts from the weekly readings	Excellent ability to understand and use the concepts from the weekly readings	Good ability to understand and use the concepts from the weekly readings	Marginal ability to understand and use the concepts from the weekly readings	Lack of ability to understand and use the concepts from the weekly readings
3. Quiz	Ability to understand and use the concepts from the weekly readings	Excellent ability to understand and use the concepts from the weekly readings	Good ability to understand and use the concepts from the weekly readings	Marginal ability to understand and use the concepts from the weekly readings	Lack of ability to understand and use the concepts from the weekly readings
4. In class presentation	Ability to explain in detail and with accuracy their project	Excellent ability to explain in detail and with accuracy their project	Good ability to explain in detail and with accuracy their project	Marginal ability to explain in detail and with accuracy their project	Lack of ability to explain in detail and with accuracy their project
5. Final project	Use the material of the class in a creative manner to conceive an artwork drawing from the notion of world-making	Excellent use the material of the class in a creative manner to conceive an artwork drawing from the notion of world-making	Good use the material of the class in a creative manner to conceive an artwork drawing from the notion of world-making	Marginal use the material of the class in a creative manner to conceive an artwork drawing from the notion of world-making	Lack of use the material of the class in a creative manner to conceive an artwork drawing from the notion of world-making

### Part III Other Information (more details can be provided separately in the teaching plan)

#### 1. Keyword Syllabus

(An indication of the key topics of the course.)

World-Making; transmedial storytelling; interactive storytelling; narrative design; science fiction; fictional worlds

#### 2. Reading List

##### 2.1 Compulsory Readings

(Compulsory readings can include books, book chapters, or journal/magazine articles. There are also collections of e-books and e-journals available from the CityU Library.)

1.	Allison C Meier, (2018) Drawing the human animal. Physiognomy. Welcome Collection, 19 September 2018, <a href="https://wellcomecollection.org/articles/W1dX_SYAACYArPQ8">https://wellcomecollection.org/articles/W1dX_SYAACYArPQ8</a>
2.	Freud, S. (1913). The dream-work (A. A. Brill, Trans.). In S. Freud & A. A. Brill (Trans.), The interpretation of dreams (pp. 277-310). MacMillan Co.
3.	Duchamp, M.(1957). "The creative act," Art News, June-July-August
4.	Ranciere, J (2004) 'The distribution of the sensible,' in <i>The Politics Of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible</i> , Continuum, pp.1-30
5.	Tobin Siebers (2010), 'Chapter 1 Introduction' in <i>Disability Aesthetics</i> , The University of Michigan Press, pp. 1-20,
6.	Aldama, F., Lindenberger, H. (2016) 'Preface' and Prologue'' in <i>Aesthetics of Discomfort, disquieting art</i> , University of Michigan Press, pp.1-20
7.	Attali, Jacques (2011) 'Ch IV: First Wave of the Future: Planetary Empire', 'Ch V: Second Wave of the Future: Planetary War', 'Third Wave of the Future: Planetary Democracy', in <i>A brief history of the future. A brave and controversial look at the twenty-first century</i> , Arcade Publishing
8.	Bernard Stiegler (2018) Escaping the Anthropocene, in <i>The Neganthropocene</i> Open Humanities Press, pp.51-63
9.	Alice Carabedian. Le "Cycle de la Culture " de Iain M. Banks : l'utopie hors de l'île. Encyclo. Revue de l'école doctorale Sciences des Sociétés ED 624, 2014, pp.129-144.
10.	"Umwelt", "Tick," Agamben, Giorgio. <i>The Open: Man and Animal</i> . 2002. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004.
11.	Guy-Félix Duportail, "Le moment topologique de la phénoménologie française. Merleau-Ponty et Derrida", <i>Archives de Philosophie</i> 2010/1 (Tome 73), pp. 47-65 (extracts)
12.	Barikin, A. (2012). "Topological Systems: An Economy Of Time" , in <i>Parallel presents: the art of Pierre Huyghe</i> . The MIT Press.
13.	Bernard Bénit (2021) "The image of thought and thought without image in Deleuze & Guattari" In <i>Journal of the CIPH</i> Volume 99, Issue 1, January 2021, pages 52 to 62 (Translated from French by Priyanka Deshmukh)
14.	Stanimir Panayotov (2016) "Diagram", in <i>New Materialism. How Matter Comes to Matter</i> <a href="https://newmaterialism.eu/almanac/d/diagram.html">https://newmaterialism.eu/almanac/d/diagram.html</a>
15.	Deleuze G, Guattari F. (1987) "Introduction: Rhizome," in <i>A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia</i> . Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, pp.3-25
16.	David Couzens Hoy, <i>The Time of Our Lives: A Critical History of Temporality</i> , MIT Press,

	2009, 288pp, , pp.66-76
17.	Reading: "El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan" "The Garden of Forking Paths“, 1941 short story by Argentine writer and poet Jorge Luis Borges

## 2.2 Additional Readings

(Additional references for students to learn to expand their knowledge about the subject.)

1.	Terry Smith (2011) Currents of world-making in contemporary art, <i>World Art</i> , 1:2, 171-188, DOI: 10.1080/21500894.2011.602712
2.	Nelson Goodman, <i>Ways of Worldmaking</i> , Hackett, Indiana, 1978
3.	Barikin, Amelia. <i>Parallel Presents: The Art of Pierre Huyghe</i> . The MIT Press, 2012.
4.	Jenkins, Henry. "Game Design as Narrative Architecture." In <i>First Person: New Media as Story, Performance, and Game</i> , Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Pat Harrigan. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2006.
5.	Whitelaw, Mitchell. <i>Metacreation: Art and Artificial Life</i> . The MIT Press, 2006.
6.	Calvino, Italo. <i>Invisible Cities</i> . New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978.
7.	Ian Condry, "Characters and Worlds as Creative Platforms," <i>The Soul of Anime: Collaborative Creativity and Japan's Media Success Story</i> (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013).
8.	Otsuka Eiji, « World and Variation: The Reproduction and Consumption of Narrative, » <i>Mechademia</i> 5, 2010, pp. 99-116.
9.	Noah Wardrip-Fruin, Michael Mateas, "Envisioning the Future of Computational Media" ( <i>Media Systems</i> ).
10.	Mark J. P. Wolf, "World Structures and Systems of Relationships," <i>Building Imaginary Worlds: The Theory and History of Subcreation</i> (London: Routledge, 2013), pp.153-197.
11.	Scarlett Ashley, Lipton Lisa, "Contingent Systems: Art and/as Algorithmic Critique," <i>Afterimage</i> (2023) 50 (2): 1–23. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1525/aft.2023.50.2.1">https://doi.org/10.1525/aft.2023.50.2.1</a>